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The Most Adorable Tax Break

A tax break for Girl Scout Cookies shows how hard it can be to get rid of loopholes

by [Ben Terris](#)

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Idaho may join 48 other states in giving Girl Scout Cookies a tax break. (Chet Susslin)

There's a reason Rep. Paul Ryan won't say which tax loopholes he'd be willing to close to make his [newly released budget](#) work. As an umbrella term, tax breaks can sound like a big, evil money suck. But when looked at individually, they can be harder to get rid of.

Wealthy corporations have a vested interest in keeping some breaks around -- and often have the money and power to do so. Other tax breaks, like the home-mortgage-interest deduction, are good for the middle class, a group politicians don't want to be seen harming. Breaks for charitable donations encourage giving money to those in need, and who doesn't want to support that?

This week in Idaho, we learned of another reason tax breaks are hard to do away with. Sometimes they are just too adorable.

Yesterday, an Idaho state House Committee agreed to a 6 percent tax break for Girl Scout cookies. The bill still needs to pass the full House and the Senate, and be signed by the governor. Every other state but one, Hawaii, currently has this tax break in place.

According to [Boise Weekly](#), each \$3.75 spent on cookies generates 22 cents to Idaho's general fund. Granting this break will cost the



state \$140,000 a year.

When asked why the Girl Scouts couldn't just raise cookie prices to cover the tax, a volunteer lobbyist for the groups [said](#) that if prices rose, the scouts would sell fewer boxes. The majority of the cookie money goes to fund scholarships and programs to promote business skills and drug prevention. Who could say no to that when girls as young as 9 speak before the committee?

Certainly not Republican Rep. Neil Anderson.

"This is absolutely the wrong way to deal with tax policy," he said.

"But I'm going to support this today."

